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## THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW<sup>1</sup>

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The subject-matter of the psychology of religion consists not only of the states of consciousness called religious, but also of all objective expressions of those states as seen in rituals, ceremonies, and other religious activities. That these latter phenomena properly come within the sphere of the psychologist, will be the more evident when it is shown that they are not merely the expressions of a pre-existing religious consciousness, but have also been of primary importance in the very development of that consciousness itself. The trend of modern psychology is toward the view that an act is not merely the reflex of a psychical state, but that the psychical state is as truly the reflex of an earlier act.<sup>2</sup> If such is the case, the evolution of any variety of conscious attitude must be intimately connected with the accompanying overt activity of the being in question. That is to say, the overt activity is not only the index of the hidden internal states of consciousness, it is also a factor of prime importance in the very production of these states. In the light of these facts,

<sup>1</sup> This article is the first section in an extended study made by the writer in primitive religious development.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John Dewey, "The reflex arc concept," *Psychological Review*, Vol. III. No. 3. Vide also James' theory of emotion, *Principles of Psychology*; and *Studies from the Yale Psychological Laboratory*, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 199 ff.

we may define the problem of the pages which follow as that of showing how the religious consciousness has been built up, or differentiated, from a back-ground of overt activity and relatively objective phases of consciousness. The assumption underlying the problem is that the religious attitude of mind has had a natural history, that there was a time in the history of the race when a definite religious attitude did not exist, and that, in its genesis and in its development, it has been conditioned by the same laws according to which other mental attitudes may be described.<sup>3</sup>

The data of the psychology of religion, like those of the biological sciences, are highly complex. This is true of all religious phenomena, whether of civilized or savage, whether mental states or ritualistic observances. This complexity is susceptible of only one interpretation, namely, that it is the result of some sort of development. With no individual or people of today may we expect to find extant the truly primitive religious consciousness. Just as in the case of animal and vegetable forms, where every generation tends to be increasingly differentiated in structure and function, so with all forms of mental process in the human being. Each succeeding psychic event is the resultant of all that have preceded it. Just as it is impossible that we should find among modern unicellular organisms specimens of a true eozoon, every form of life today carrying in its body the record of untold generations of struggle and adaptation, so does every manifestation of conscious life represent a complexity from the mere fact that it has been preceded by other expressions of consciousness.

Now, though we cannot know precisely the nature of really primitive forms, we can describe with more or less exactitude many of the factors which have tended to produce complexity of structure and function; we also can often know with some precision in what the changes have consisted. This is especially

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Nansen, "Religious ideas must be ascribed to the same natural laws which condition all other phenomena," *Eskimo Life*, p. 211; "Religious ideas must . . . be reckoned as a natural product of the human mind itself, under the influence of its surroundings," *ibid.*, p. 209.

true of biological evolution. At any rate there have been sufficiently numerous attempts to formulate the process. On the side of the evolution of conscious attitudes of various kinds, however, there is still much less clearness of formulation. In regard to religious phenomena, then, it seems necessary at the outset to raise some preliminary questions as to the nature of the evolutionary process which lies back of the religious or any other complex conscious attitude of today.

To begin with, the psychologist can hardly rest satisfied with the assumption that the religious consciousness is a development from some ultimate religious instinct or perception. Such terms are usually used very loosely by students of religious phenomena. In many cases they are simply ways of saying, under the guise of science, that the religious attitude is innate, that it develops from some original sense, or elemental power. This is certainly the thought which Müller, Tiele, and Jastrow convey by tracing religion to a perception of the infinite. Jastrow uses instinct as interchangeable with perception of the infinite. Brinton's postulate of "a religiosity of man as a part of his psychical being" is closely akin to the instinct theory.

It is only in name that such theories of religion are scientific. Evolutionary science proves pretty conclusively that instincts are not original, elemental endowments, but rather products, modes of reaction, built up in the course of, and hence definitely related to the process of organic development. They are adjustments of the organism to certain features of the physical environment that have proved of importance to it in the struggle for existence. It must be borne in mind that the fundamental thing about an instinct is that it is a mode of overt *reaction*, and that neither in its genesis, nor in its functioning, is there need for the assumption that any conscious process or processes are involved in it. If consciousness has any place in an instinctive reaction it is only as an after-effect, or especially when the instinct, under some shift of conditions, ceases to work smoothly, or fails entirely. Consciousness, in other words, is an adjusting apparatus for remedying the deficiencies of instinct.

To hold that religion is an instinct, or that it develops from

an instinct, can only mean that it is some physiological adjustment to the environment necessitated by the life process or that it is the conscious attitude aroused by the failure of such an adjustment to function properly. In either case we are involved in serious confusion. In no intelligible way can we think of the religious consciousness or religious acts as being directly related to the biological struggle for life. If religion is to be called an instinct, it certainly requires a redefinition of the term instinct. As was stated in a foregoing paragraph, however, the real thought those have meant to convey, who have applied instinct to religion, is that the latter is something original and innate in man. The use of such a term thinly disguises as scientific a notion that is entirely unscientific. The scientific mind cannot be satisfied to regard anything as innate. Its so-called ultimate data are ultimate only to the philosopher and to the unscientific. The instinct theory as described above, belongs to the philosophy and not to the psychology of religion.

There is another instinct theory of religion, the one proposed by Dr. H. R. Marshall,<sup>4</sup> which at first sight seems to avoid the difficulty suggested above. He holds that religion is an instinct developed from acts useful to the race as a whole but injurious to the individual, and actually performed in the face of consciously felt self-interests. It will be seen that instinct is here conceived more scientifically than in the cases cited in the foregoing pages, but it is nevertheless open to severe criticism. It is, for instance, incredible that an instinct should have arisen which does not and never did appeal to the individual in some way, even though it brought him injury in the end. This difficulty is not relieved by Marshall's elaborate attempt to show that an instinct act is the reaction of the organism as a whole, while acts prompted by reason and self-interest are only partial reactions of the organism. This theory we cannot discuss here, further than to say that only by reading a preconceived theory into the facts can this relationship of instinct to reason be maintained.

The most serious difficulty, however, with Marshall's theory,

<sup>4</sup> Henry Rutgers Marshall, *Instinct and Reason*, New York, 1899.

as it at present concerns us, is that of how one may account for the origin of religion as a *conscious attitude*, even if it be granted that it is based on a set of instinctive physical adjustments. Marshall meets the objection by holding that all nervous activity is accompanied by a measure of consciousness, and hence that an "instinct act" has, of necessity, its instinct feeling. Thus, he holds, is the complex religious attitude built up. This basis is so purely an assumption, and is so entirely gratuitous, as to be unworthy of consideration in a scientific treatment of religion. Marshall practically makes religious acts hereditary together with their conscious accompaniments, whereas observation seems to point to the conclusion that it is the ability to perform certain movements that is hereditary, and that consciousness follows only under special circumstances.

We ourselves shall try to show that the religious attitude is evolved from a matrix of activities of a certain kind, but that it bears a direct functional relationship to these activities and is not *merely* their parallelistic accompaniment. We gain nothing and explain nothing by saying that religious acts are in some way advantageous to the race and then assuming what is really the main problem, i. e., that the complicated religious consciousness is already present if the instinct acts called religious are present. The problem is *to show how and why, given certain acts, that the religious consciousness, or attitude has been built up*. The attempt to conceive religion after the analogy of an organic instinct not only does not bring us to the main problem, but even tends to make us ignore it.

A word further should be said regarding the theories that conceive religion as developed from some primitive *sense* or *perception*. After asserting that religion originates in man's perception of the infinite, Jastrow continues:

The further question . . . how man comes to possess *power* to attain to a perception of the Infinite, is one that transcends the limits of historical investigation, which is required only to answer the question of how the power is brought into action. The power itself, like the religious instinct, the emotional possibilities, the unsatisfied longings, and the intellectual phases of his nature, forms part of man's equipment, from which every science connected with man necessarily starts out. Just as anthropology assumes man

to be existing and occupying the place proper to him in the universe, so historical science starts with man as a being endowed with reason, certain emotions, and certain instincts, with the capacity of thought and the power to receive impressions on his mind.<sup>5</sup>

It may be granted that this is a satisfactory assumption for the history of religion, but what Jastrow here presupposes, it should be the business of psychology to explain. If, however, psychology can show that the so-called perception of the infinite has a natural history and is therefore susceptible of a simpler statement, and, further, that it is not a capacity which can be placed alongside thought as an original datum, requiring only to have its manifestations traced, then historical science is bound to take account of the fact in its treatment of the subject.

Jastrow is to be criticized, not because as a historian he assumes a religious attitude as *his* starting point, but because he assumes that this is really the beginning of the whole matter as far as science goes. Thus, in harmony with his theory, he holds that there is in every one a dormant religious sense, which is aroused by various circumstances of life; for example, certain practical considerations bring "the religious emotions into play"<sup>6</sup> as if they were already there and needed only to be excited to activity. This sort of explanation often passes for psychological; that it is not such, in any sense of the word, we shall trust to our exposition to prove. The naïve way in which psychological concepts are used in works on the science of religion is further illustrated by the following:

Granting that the earliest manifestations of the religious life are purely instinctive, still they are also called forth by a recognition, however faint, of the possibility of establishing proper relations between man and the universe about him.<sup>7</sup>

Practically everything that needs explanation is here assumed, the thought seeming to be that to use these psychological terms is to give a psychological explanation. The sentence

<sup>5</sup> *The study of religion*, pp. 195, 196. Cf. Tiele, *The science of religion*, Vol. II, p. 233, "It is man's original, unconscious (!), innate sense of infinity that gives rise to his first stammering utterances of that sense, and all his beautiful dreams of the past and the future."

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 277.

above quoted seems to explain the origin thus: Man has an instinctive perception of the Infinite and an intellectual recognition of the necessity of proper adjustment to it and, presto! we have religion.

Conceptions of religion, such as those just criticized, suggest the need of a careful definition of the field to be investigated. The science of religion by failing to analyze these very things becomes trivial. We can make little progress in understanding the evolution of religion until we have a more definite notion of the exact nature of the content with which we are dealing. Entirely aside from questions of origin, the fact of religion of any kind in certain individuals implies some sort of conscious states. These conscious states, whatever else they are, may be described in part at least as valuational.<sup>8</sup> The religious consciousness may be called a valuating attitude toward something real or imagined. By an attitude is meant an organization of various mental capacities in a definite way about certain situations, or problems of life. Attitudes are correlated with the situations, not in the sense that they are results, but simply in that a reaction to the situation necessitates such an organization of mental elements on the part of the individual. It would follow, if a situation could be presented fully to both a savage and a civilized man, that the psychological adjustments of each would be much the same, differences being due chiefly to variations in physical capacity. Thus the man of culture might enjoy the subtle colors of a great painting more than the savage simply because his nervous system had been accustomed to respond to more delicate gradations of color, or, negatively, because it had not been debauched by coarse stimulation. The difference of reaction would hence be chiefly due to the degree of physical adaptability.

Thus we have complex aesthetic attitudes, intellectual attitudes, scientific attitudes, attitudes toward government, as the democratic, the monarchical, the socialistic; attitudes toward marriage, family life, education, and so on almost indefinitely, and among others of these organizations of disposition and ability to react, is the *religious attitude*. As such it involves an

<sup>8</sup> Hoeffding, *Philosophy of Religion*.



emotional recognition of values of some kind, an intellectual tendency to affirm or deny them, and a positive inclination to act in some way or other with reference to them. Generically, religion does not differ from many other attitudes which may also be described as valuational. A part of our problem is to determine how it may be differentiated from them. We shall further attempt to trace the origin and development of the sense of value in general, and of this sense of value in particular.

We are surely not compromising ourselves for a genuine scientific discussion by offering such a preliminary conception of religion. We choose to call it an attitude because it involves a recognized emotional appreciation of the conceived values and a tendency to act in some way regarding them.

This is probably the psychological truth in the conceptions of Müller, Tiele, and Jastrow, referred to in the preceding paragraphs. The perception of the Infinite, if it means anything at all, must refer to the feeling for some sort of value. Perception, as the term occurs here, is evidently not used in a psychological sense, but rather as an attitude assumed toward something recognized in some way to exist or to be true. When Jastrow says that there is at least some recognition in man of the possibility of establishing proper relations between himself and the universe, he undoubtedly refers to a genuine conscious state which, as psychologists, we must regard as an aspect of this evaluating attitude. This also is evidently the meaning of the words of Tiele, quoted on a preceding page. "Why," he asks in another place, "is man discontented with his condition and surroundings?"<sup>9</sup> If he is dissatisfied, we should say it is probably because he has some notion of values which he has not yet fully realized. Even supposing that men have God revealed to them, why should they try to put themselves in relation to him?<sup>10</sup> This question suggests that religion is not merely a belief in some fact of the universe, but that it also involves appreciation and adjustment, the appreciation of values and an active attitude toward them.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 228.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Tiele, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

There have been many attempts to find the common element of the various religions of the world, but with small success. The idea of a god or deity, is certainly not universal, nor is there any other objective content or belief which can be selected as such. The common element, if there is one, must rather be sought on the psychic side, in the form of some sort of attitude or disposition which can be properly called religious. An examination of all religions, whether of savage or of civilized peoples, reveals in them all an appreciative attitude toward some sort of values. These may range from the secret names and the sacred bull-roarers of the Australians to the conception of a divine organization of the universe, demanding of every individual purity of heart and the most upright conduct.

The feeling for worth, or value, might well be judged a primary psychic element. Perhaps it is not as primitive as mere feeling or cognition, but at any rate it is a relatively simple conscious state, the genesis and development of which can be traced with some assurance. There are, of course, many values that are not religious, and there are therefore many value attitudes which have no religious significance. One of the first problems will then be that of determining the circumstances under which religious attitudes have acquired definite demarkation from other conscious states involving a sense of value.

It should be clearly understood before proceeding farther exactly what is referred to by the term *value*. The value element of an experience is sometimes set over against what is called the existential. That is to say, an experience has a certain content, of sensation, feeling, and image, perhaps, all of which forms the existential side. This content, however, may serve a variety of purposes, and hence have different values, just as a tool, such as a hammer, may contribute toward the realization of different ends and so have different degrees of worth. This distinction applies to religious states of mind. Thus Professor James says, "Every religious phenomenon has its history and its derivation from natural antecedents. . . . the existential facts (however) by themselves are insufficient for determining the value; and the best adepts of the higher criticism ac-

cordingly never confound the existential with the spiritual problem."<sup>11</sup> The content of a religious experience may be regarded as one thing and its dynamic qualities with reference to the universe in which it occurs, as another. Whether existence and worth can thus be held apart in an ultimate analysis is a deeper question that the psychologist may, for the time being, leave unconsidered. But there is an aspect of worth, or value, which does concern him, namely, the *consciousness of value*. Along with the existential elements, referred to above, there is also the feeling (I use the term in the popular sense) that they have a certain value or meaning. They may not *actually have this value at all*, but that is entirely immaterial to the psychologist. The "feeling" of worth, or significance, is there, however, and may be regarded as one of the given elements of the conscious state and, as such, it should be accounted for. It is important that these two sides of the question be ever clearly distinguished. The one is really a metaphysical problem, and depends for its solution upon the nature of the relationship existing between the different parts of the universe. While we do not deny that the answer may be sought from a psychological point of view, the latter problem, that of the feeling for value itself, is the one which concerns us in this study.

An analysis of values is the chief task of the psychology of religion. As far as psychology can deal with the evolution of religion, it should inquire how the valuating attitude arose, how it developed, the causes which lead it to take this form and that, why, for instance, it is found variously stated in terms of deities or ideals, ancestors, spirits, forces of nature, culture-heroes, and the like. Whatever else there is about religion will be comparatively easy to explain, when we have once reached an understanding regarding its conceptions of worth.

The statement was made above that the organizations of consciousness, described as attitudes, bear a definite relation to overt conditions. We turn now to examine this point, and to show that the objective conditions possess positive psychological value for the student of the evolution of religion. If the religious

<sup>11</sup> *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 4, 5.

attitude is a construct, as here assumed, we are bound to study it not only with reference to the people who lay claim to it, but also with reference to its so-called expressions in all possible objective avenues.

It will be interesting to examine this point first and briefly on the side of general mentality. To what extent does the complex mental life of the modern man represent an absolute increase in mental capacity and to what extent is it related to the development of external situations affording opportunity for increasingly complex types of mental activity? As far as mental capacity, *per se*, is concerned, the natural races of today are not apparently inferior to the culture races. If this is the case, it has important bearings upon the question of what sort of evolution, if any, has taken place in the religious consciousness of man.

Let us follow up the question a little farther on the side of mentality in general. Anthropological literature contains much material that is favorable to the view that the absolute mental status of the primitive races of today is comparatively high. Thus:

With the development of the special organs of sense, memory, and consequent ability to compare present experiences with past, with inhibition or the ability to decline to act on a stimulus, and, finally, with abstraction, or the power of separating general from particular aspects, we have a condition where the organism sits still, as it were, and picks and chooses its reactions to the outer world; and by working in certain lines, to the exclusion of others, it gains in its turn control of the environment and begins to reshape it.<sup>12</sup>

And further:

In respect to brain structure and the more important mental faculties, we find that no race is radically unlike the others.<sup>13</sup>

The fact that the modern savage, taken in his accustomed environment, does not seem inferior to the civilized man in memory, abstraction, inhibition, mechanical ingenuity, lends plausibility to the theory that progress has been in other ways than in mere increase of mental capacity as such.

<sup>12</sup> W. I. Thomas, *Sex and Society*, p. 252.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

The mental capacity of different people and different peoples may be much alike, while their actual mental activity varies widely. This is due to difference in stimulating conditions, or opportunity. It is in this respect that the civilized man differs from the savage, and it is also probably in this respect that the modern man differs most from the primitive man, after the human type of mentality was once established in him. Psychic evolution, after the first dawn of self-consciousness, has been, in other words, chiefly an evolution of situations stimulating to certain types of activity, disposition, and attitude. A man of the white race stands on a vast objective accumulation of culture, of the products of intellect. He can do complicated things with intricate machinery because there is a complicated mechanical environment to stimulate him. He can think subtle trains of thought because there is such a thought environment, in which he may place himself if he so desires. His psychic life is a more or less direct counterpart of the organization of the world about him. As Professor Thomas says:

The fundamental explanation of the difference in the mental life of two groups is not that the capacity of the brain to do work is different, but that the attention is not in the two cases stimulated and engaged along the same lines. Whenever society furnishes copies and stimulations of a certain kind, a body of knowledge, and a technique, practically all its members are able to work on the plan and scale in vogue there, and members of an alien race, who become acquainted in a real sense with the system, can work under it. But when society does not furnish the stimulations, or when it has preconceptions which tend to inhibit the run of attention in given lines, then the individual shows no intelligence in these lines.<sup>14</sup>

On widely different planes of culture, the difference is not one of mental powers involved, the savage having the same faculties as does the civilized, but rather in the direction of their use.

These considerations regarding the evolution of mentality in general may be applied directly to the development of religious attitudes. Each new generation has a certain environment passed on to it and consequently certain possibilities of reaction. An environment, social and natural, may be said to have correlated with it a certain type of mental activity, especially on the part of

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

those who are born in it. If one generation after another continues in a given type of situation and reacts to it in about the same way, we may be sure that the mental concomitants will continue generally the same. Conscious rather than instinctive reaction is, of course, here referred to. What is transmitted from generation to generation is, then, certain sorts of reactions or conditions which provoke such reactions. The mental states accompanying these reactions, all their emotional values, and the entire set of psychic dispositions associated therewith, may be said to be transmitted by social heredity.

We are not here concerned with the problem of why the external opportunities are greater among some peoples than among others, but rather simply to show that complexity of psychic life depends on opportunity afforded for its exercise; and further that this complexity is not necessarily bred into the race; that is, it does not become a part of its original, or instinctive nature. Given the same external environment and the same stimulating problems, each new generation, as it reacts, finds itself in possession of the attitudes and dispositions of its predecessors.

The chief problem of the evolution of religion may then be restated as that of showing how situations affording opportunity for certain types of reaction have been built up. Can there then be a psychology of religious development? We answer in the affirmative, because in analyzing these situations we are stating the objective conditions for the appearance of the religious attitude. Whatever may be possible in the way of an analysis of the mental attitude *per se*, must rest ultimately upon the recognition of the objective conditions of its appearance. These pass on from one generation to another and are the means of keeping alive, or of arousing the mental concomitants.

The religious consciousness is, then, first of all an attitude rather than an instinct or a "perception."<sup>15</sup> It is an attitude toward certain values, imagined or real. It is, moreover, an attitude which may truly be said to have been gradually evolved,

<sup>15</sup> It is possible that those who hold that it is the latter would maintain that they were quite willing to call it an attitude. If so, we should probably nevertheless differ on the question of its origin.

and yet its presence in any given individual is largely a matter of social heredity. The present writer can see no reason for assuming that any attitude or disposition, even the aesthetic or religious, has in any sense been bred into the race as an instinct. The fact that there is no material difference in the intellectual faculties of widely separate stages of culture seems to point unquestionably to the view that the seeming differences are the result of the objective accumulation of certain kinds of stimuli. If space permitted, abundant evidence could be adduced to prove that the presence or absence of these secondary forms of consciousness, for example, the aesthetic, is, in the case of the masses of any people, dependable upon social suggestion in some form or other. This view of the matter in no sense depreciates the finer elaborations of consciousness. It simply regards them as constructions rather than as original traits.

Thus far little or no proof has been offered in support of our theory that the religious consciousness belongs to the attitudes and is not a primary manifestation of psychic life. We shall have, however, to depend upon the entire discussion of the chapters which follow for such proof. If the conception proves to be one that can be better utilized than any other it may be regarded as fairly well established, at least.

There has been a tendency on the part of some to separate sharply the psychology of religion from the ethnology of religion, and from all aspects of the history of religious practices and observances. Thus, it has been held that the psychological study deals with "the feelings, the thoughts, the desires, the impulses (as far as they enter into religion), while the historical and social study deals with the results of these desires, thoughts, and feelings, when they have been transformed in a process of social consolidation and set up as *objects* of belief (doctrines, beliefs), or as modes of worship (rites and ceremonials). . . . The most important remark to be made concerning these two classes of facts is that the former owes its existence to the latter; corporate religion owes its existence to the individual religious experiences, in the same sense as a political organization to the individuals composing it. Beliefs and ceremonials are, in a way,

higher products resulting from the elemental experiences of the individual."<sup>16</sup> The assumption, in other words, is that religious states of mind exist first of all in the individual, and that only later do they objectify themselves in the social group. The same author says, "...the Psychology of Religion deals with the formative elements of corporate religion, while the History of Religion deals with the complex products."<sup>17</sup>

The primacy of the subjective state, as here assumed, may well be questioned. The analogy between religion with its objective manifestations and the individual and political organization is certainly fallacious.<sup>18</sup> The question here is not as to whether a certain type of overt process presupposes the existence of individual agents. That, of course, goes without saying. The question is rather as to the relationship between the external act and the internal attitude. It is so evidently true in adult life that action follows thought, that it is difficult to think of the mental state as any other than primary. But, as suggested in the early part of this chapter, the mental state is just as truly connected with the preceding active state as it is with the one which follows. In fact it is due to something in what precedes, that mental activity of some sort comes to be at all. Unquestionably, instinctive and reflex action is more primitive than consciousness or consciously directed activity. The appearance of the latter may be taken as evidence that the reflex or habitual equipment of the organism has proved insufficient to meet all the demands of the environment that are requisite to life. Whether we are able to state with precision all the terms in the relationship between overt mechanically controlled action and that which is consciously directed, it is certainly safe to assume that the conscious processes are truly of the nature of specializations within the primitive reactions, rendering possible the attainment of more complex results or ends. The various types of mental

<sup>16</sup> James Leuba, "Introduction to the Psychology of Religion," *The Monist*, Vol. XI, p. 197.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 197, 198.

<sup>18</sup> Professor Leuba has read this discussion and states that his position was taken with quite a different problem in mind. We retain the criticism, however, for the sake of bringing out our own point more clearly.



contents may be regarded as moments, or phases in the differentiation of the instinctive or habitual act. They stand for certain stages in the separation of the stimulus from the response, or for certain types of tension which have arisen in the simpler and, at most, not acutely conscious activities. Consequently, all such mental elements as ideas, emotions, and volitions, or whatever else we may choose to call them, are products rather than original data, a fact which must be borne in mind in all discussions involving them. That is, mental processes are in some way differentiations out of previous overt activity, as well as the causes of some kind of subsequent activity.<sup>19</sup>

In general, a complicated, intensive, active life demands, and has a complicated psychic accompaniment. To see that this is true, we need only compare the amount of mental activity required by the modern captain of finance or industry with that necessary to the rustic who is far removed from the active stress of life. The circle of ideas, the comprehension of human nature, the ability to execute complicated acts is immeasurably greater in one than in the other, and shall we doubt that the contrast is due to the difference in the situation faced by the two? If it is urged that there is very probably a native capacity in one that is not in the other, we reply that even that native capacity has been selected and enhanced by just such stimulating environments. However, if there is no difference in *mental capacity, per se*, there is certainly more *mentality* where there is greater opportunity for its use.

On the side of race development, it may be said that the complex mental states of the modern man, his almost unlimited powers of ideal combination and construction, his elaborate concepts and his ability to utilize them in subtle trains of thought, his desires, his judgments of worth, his feeling attitudes, varying from the simplest recognition of pleasure and pain to the appreciation of the most refined aesthetic, moral, and religious values, have been made possible by the active attitude he has assumed to-

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller discussion of these points, with illustrations from child psychology, the reader is referred to the author's work, *The Psychology of Child Development*, 2d ed., pp. 92-105.

ward the world and his fellow men. This active attitude, this impulse to grapple with something is primary, while the subjective states of the individual seem to be products.

The principles just stated are applicable not only to the development of psychic life itself in both individual and race, but also to the more complex forms of psychic life, which we have called attitudes, or dispositions. Thus the aesthetic, the religious, the scientific, and the domestic attitudes are moments in the development of more and more complicated types of reaction. To what extent these attitudes were thus bred into the race, it is impossible to say. As shown earlier in this chapter, their appearance in the individual is so intimately associated with the character of the social environment that it is entirely probable that social heredity plays a preponderating part in their appearance in succeeding generations. *The objective conditions which first produced them are passed on, and each new generation thus falls into a certain mould, finds itself stimulated to certain kinds of activities.* The channels for the expression of its impulses being thus more or less predetermined, it is inevitable that the same conscious attitudes should appear as were possessed by the generation preceding it.

In view of these general principles, it may well be asked whether religious practices, which some authors consign entirely to the sphere of history, have not positive psychological value. It is true that the overt practices, the rituals, as we see them, are to a certain extent the outcome of earlier subjective states. But that this is the case with primitive rituals is another question. The tendency today, among students of primitive life, is to regard all such customs as in large measure the products of a relatively unconscious evolution.<sup>20</sup> The customs, the rituals, the language of primal man, were definitely related to the situations and problems which touched his life. Since they are the development on the side of the human being of these situations, may we not go farther and hold that, far from being merely the expression of the religious attitudes of groups of individuals, they were and are in a very genuine sense the causes and sustainers

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Dewey & Tufts, *Ethics*, pp. 52 f.

of these attitudes? In other words the position here assumed, and which can be justified only through the entire series of chapters which follow, is this: However much it may be possible to analyze the fully developed religious consciousness in isolation, genetically it must be considered along with these objective conditions which it is related to, not as cause, but as effect.

Some such position as here taken is the logical outcome of the rejection of religion as an instinct or as something original and innate. From such a point of view, the evolution of religion becomes a definite branch of social psychology, and is capable of investigation according to strictly scientific methods. To make the objective manifestations of religion positive factors in the development of the psychic state called religious, will not only render each more intelligible, but will help to a better understanding of the relation between ancient and modern types of religion. From such a point of view we shall be led to say that there is no such thing, for instance, as a detached sense of duty, or of sin, which is applied here and there as opportunity may offer or render appropriate, but rather that these feelings represent certain crises in action, and that the character of the preceding action has been of direct importance in the determination of the character of the resulting conscious states. This is certainly true of the child's first sense of duty. Adult society furnishes the atmosphere which interprets the emotional values felt by children, and which builds up the complicated social attitudes such as are named above. To what extent could a child be taught, or have imparted to him a sense of duty or a sense of affection or of remorse aside from contact with the real situations of life? His moral and religious sentiments are the products of, and the evidences of, the ways he has reacted toward life.